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AUTHOR DeLeon, Josephine
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ABSTRACT

The paper addresses the need for evaluating instructional materials to be used with bilingual or limited English speaking exceptional children. The scarcity of materials geared for this population is noted, and the need for evaluating existing materials prior to adapting them is discussed. Five questions are posed, touching on correspondence with instructional objectives, derivation of materials, validating statements, possibilities for increasing the cultural relevance, and use by a small group or individually. Guidelines for evaluation deal with theoretical foundation, content, useability, assessment, cost, and evaluation. The importance of examining teacher and student characteristics as well as the curriculum is depicted in a diagram of the classroom ecological system. After the material is evaluated for match/mismatch with student needs, the next step is explained to be adaptation. Four issues in adaptation are discussed: the child's skill level, cultural background, learning and perceptual style, and language ability. (CL)

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EVALUATING AND ADAPTING MATERIALS FOR USE WITH BILINGUAL EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Josephine DeLeon
New Mexico State University
Department of Educational Specialties

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Recently interest has grown in providing services for the bilingual exceptional child or at least for those children whose home language is something other than English. Most educators have realized that there are considerations that must be taken into account in teaching these children. Such considerations go beyond those needs of the English-dominant exceptional child.

If you look at what has been written by special educators concerning the teaching of these children, you'll find that most are saying that the child's language and culture should be a major part of the curriculum for this unique group. No doubt, this is an idea that we should all be working toward, however, for teachers this may be too overwhelming to deal with. Teachers may feel unsure of what this means. They may not know how to begin such a task, especially if they are monolingual English or if they understand very little about a different cultural group. Such feelings of uncertainty are perfectly common and natural for despite the fact that we are a country which can best be described as an ethnic mosaic, we have virtually ignored such diversity in our schools. Consequently, our teachers have not been trained to deal with the circumstances that a culturally different learner may bring into her classroom. This paper has been especially designed for such teachers and will hopefully provide some practical answers to common problems that they may encounter.

It has been stated that making the curriculum and class materials especially relevant to the culturally different exceptional child is important because (s)he suffers from a

"double whammy" in society. (S)He is seen as being different by his (her) own cultural group because (s)he is exceptional and is seen as different by the majority culture because of ethnic differences (Chinn, 1979). The manner in which the child feels that (s)he is accepted by those in the school will affect feelings of self and indirectly affect learning. This may be a crucial point for those ethnic groups which research has indicated are externally directed (Rueda & Prieto, 1979).

The need for the culturally different child to be accepted by the school and the fact that the law in this country requires that the exceptional child receive the most appropriate education leaves little doubt of the need for the use of materials designed for a culturally different exceptional population. Chinn (1979) using two data bases was unable to generate any curriculum that was especially designed for any culturally different exceptional population. He was able to derive some suggested strategies that special educators had written about claiming that they were nonetheless not based on any research. Materials are also extremely scarce. Chinn states that materials and curriculum for teaching this group may exist but may have been developed by districts or teachers for their own use and therefore are not published. This appears to be a logical deduction, however, in a statewide study headed by Cegelka and Rodriguez (1982) in California there appeared to be little evidence that these district and teacher-made materials existed in that state. If the California case is evident of the state of the art, then we have a long way to go before we have those materials designed for culturally and linguistically different exceptional groups.

If the materials are virtualy nonexistent then what can be done? The teacher who has culturally and linguistically different exceptional learners in her classroom has no other recourse presently but to improvise and adapt existing materials intended for a general exceptional population and/or adapt bilingual/bicultural materials.

Before materials can be adapted they must first be evaluated for their general applicability and usefulness. Before they are evaluated they must be selected. The selection process is quite simple, it may be based on the teacher's training and philosophy of teaching or it may be geared toward the group that is being taught. In either case personal judgement seems to be the determining factor. Some teachers prefer translating or adapting materials written in English intended for a general exceptional population. Others prefer to use bilingual/bicultural materials because they like the fact that the materials are in the child's native language and take cultural aspects into consideration.

Evaluating the materials should be a process that goes beyond the teacher's personal preference. The qualities of the material are of specific concern while considering the cultural and linguistic group that they are intended for. The evaluation of the materials and curriculum is critical in the provision of services for the exceptional child. Ultimately, this process has the greatest impact outside of the teaching itself, in the type of instructional learning that the child will receive. The child's language and culture are of special concern here.

EVALUATING MATERIALS FOR USE WITH CULTURALLY DIVERSE

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

1. DOES THE MATERIAL MEET THE INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES?

2. IF USING BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, IS THERE A STATEMENT AS TO HOW THE MATERIALS WERE DERIVED?

   A. WERE THE MATERIALS TRANSLATED FROM ENGLISH MATERIALS? IF SO, IS THE TERMINOLOGY USED UNDERSTANDABLE AND APPROPRIATE FOR THE GROUP YOU ARE WORKING WITH?

   B. ARE THE MATERIALS FROM MEXICO, SPAIN, SOUTH AMERICA, OR SOME OTHER COUNTRY AND ARE THEY RELEVANT?

3. IF THE MATERIALS ARE INTENDED FOR A GENERAL EXCEPTIONAL POPULATION CAN THEY BE MADE CULTURALLY RELEVANT?

   A. CAN THE MATERIALS BE ADAPTED SO THAT CULTURALLY RELEVANT TOPICS ARE DISCUSSED OR INCLUDED?

   B. CAN LANGUAGE BE TRANSLATED IF NEEDED WITHOUT CHANGING THE TASK?

   C. CAN THE MATERIALS BE REDIRECTED OR CHANGED TO ACCOMODATE A DIFFERENCE IN LEARNING?

4. IS THERE A VALIDITY STATEMENT?

   A. WHAT IS THE RATIONALE FOR DERIVING THE MATERIALS IN A PARTICULAR MANNER (TRANSLATION, IMPORTED FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY DESIGNED, ETC.).

   B. WHAT CULTURAL GROUP HAVE THEY BEEN USED WITH?

   C. IF THE MATERIALS ARE DESIGNED FOR A PARTICULAR EXCEPTIONALITY, BASED ON YOUR EXPERTISE AND ON RESEARCH ARE THE MATERIALS APPROPRIATE?

   D. IS THERE AN ENDORSEMENT FROM A PARTICULAR GROUP OR ORGANIZATION WHO WOULD KNOW ABOUT EDUCATING THE POPULATION YOU ARE WORKING WITH?

   E. DO THE MATERIALS TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DIFFERENCES IN LEARNING STYLE OR LEARNING PATTERNS? HAS THE APPROACH BEEN SUBSTANTIATED BY RESEARCH?

5. CAN THE MATERIALS BE USED BY A SMALL GROUP OR FOR SELF-INSTRUCTION?

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING CURRICULUM
FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

CURRICULUM:_____

AUTHOR(S):_____

PUBLISHER:_____

I. Theoretical Foundation

1. Does it represent a specific philosophy? Yes____ No____ If yes, is this philosophy based on sound research? Yes____No____

2. Does it include a specific philosophy of the culturally diverse learner? Yes____ No____ If yes, is this philosophy based on sound research? Yes____ No____

II. Content

1. What population is program intended for (C.A., M.A., Developmental Range, Exceptionality, ethnic group(s), socioeconomic group)?_____

2. Is program appropriate for intended population? Yes____ No____

3. Are content areas included? Yes____ No ____ If yes, list them_____
_____

4. What does material stress (Personal Development, Social Development, Self-concept, Safety, Emotional growth, Communication, Muscular Development, Perceptual Development, etc.)?_____
_____

5. Are there behavioral objectives? Yes____ No ____
   A. Are objectives clearly written. Yes____ No____
   B. Are objectives realistic for intended population? Yes____ No____

6. Are there instructional activities? Yes____ No ____ Are the activities appropriate for the population you are working with? Yes____ No ____ Can the activities be translated if necessary? Yes____ No ____ Are the activities culturally appropriate? Yes____ No____

7. Are materials suggested? Yes ____ No ____ if yes, are materials specifically related to activities and objectives? Yes____ No ____ Are the materials appropriate for the population that you are working with? Yes____No____

   Can the materials be adapted, if necessary? Yes____ No ____

III. Useability

1. Is specific training required of teacher for use in classroom? Yes____ No ____
2. Can parents understand the program/text? Yes____ No ____

3. Is it specifically useful for just one exceptionality or is it generalizable to other areas? Yes ____ No ____

IV. Assessment

1. Pre-post measures are included. Yes____ No ____
2. Is testing data norm or criterion-referenced?_____
3. Does it contain a continuous monitoring system? Yes____ No ____

V. Cost

Cost for implementation in school district?_____

VI. Evaluation

1. Has program been field tested? Yes____ No ____ If yes, describe procedures (date, population, etc.)_____
2. Give brief summary of results._____
_____
3. Are references provided? Yes____ No ____

VII. Implementation Recommendations

_____

_____

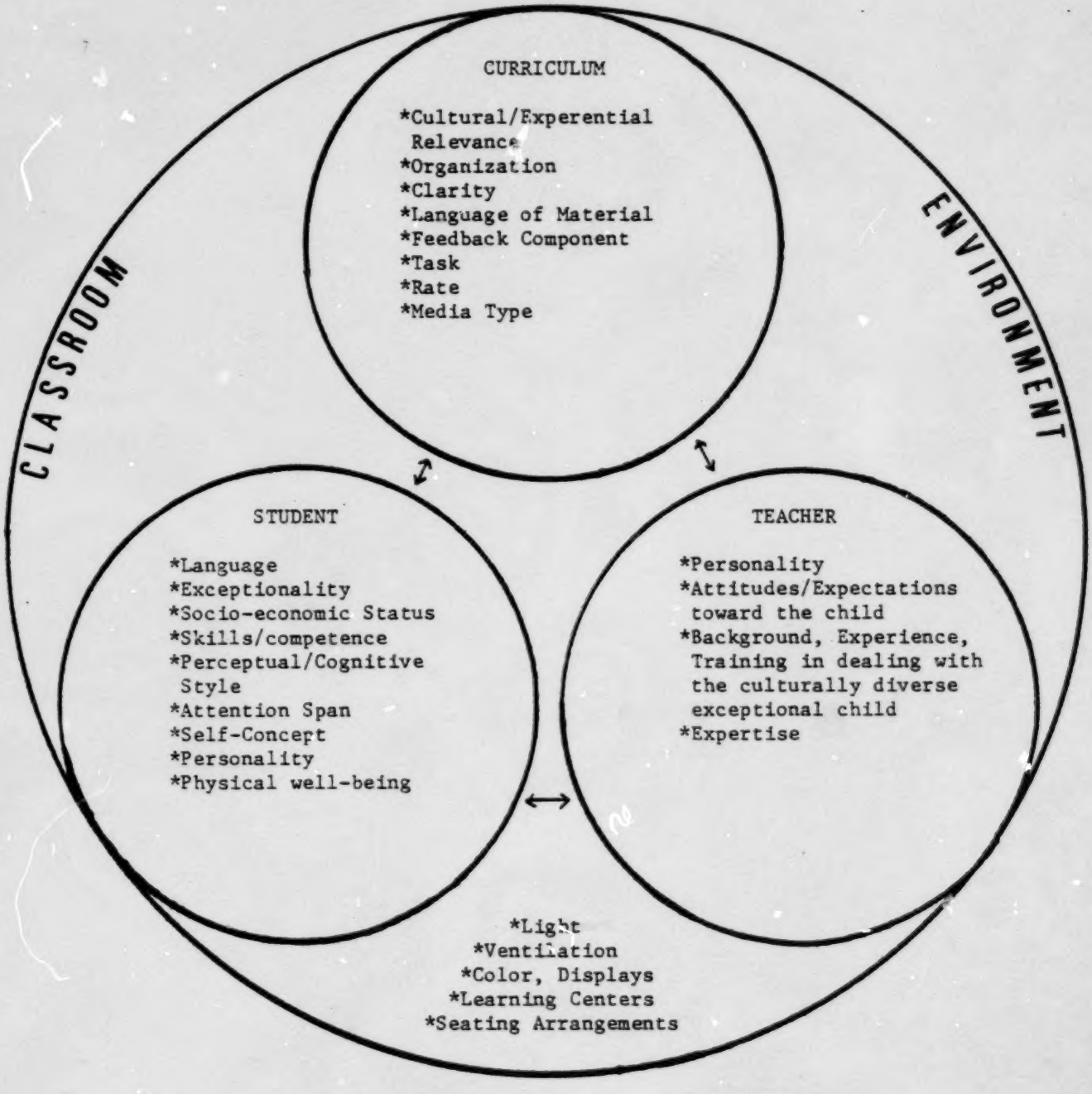
_____

_____

Once we have evaluated the materials and the curriculum the next step is to determine whether they are as appropriate as we thought they were. Have we established the kind of match that we want in order to maximize the opportunity for student learning? It sounds like a complex process of analysis, however, most teachers do this type of analysis many times a day and are very proficient at it. The intention of its presentation here is to include information on the culturally diverse learner that is perhaps not as natural in the analysis. In the analysis we want to examine teacher and student characteristics along with the features of the curriculum. If we look at the classroom as an ecological system, we can readily see that all three impinge on each other. The teacher's personality, attitudes and expectations, background and experience are going to determine how the classroom looks and the class is conducted. All these things will affect the type of curriculum or materials that are chosen for use with the culturally diverse exceptional learner. Student characteristics such as the skills the child brings with him(her), the exceptionality, SES, cognitive and perceptual styles. attention span, etc. will affect teacher response, curriculum and materials selection, and the general classroom environment.

THE CLASSROOM

AS AN ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM



Adapted From: Cross-cultural Educational Assessment Skills Workshop: Training Process and Materials, Developed by California Regional Resource Center, Los Angeles, CA, 1978.

CHILD PROFILE - MATERIALS CHARACTERISTICS MATCH LIST

Child Profile	Materials Review	Match	Nonmatch
a. Skills to acquire	Objectives, purpose, scope		
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	comments_____	
_____	_____	_____	
b. Entry Level skills	Prerequisites required		
1. language	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	comments_____	
2. content area	_____	_____	
_____			
c. Preferred Instruction formats	Format used to present information	Match	Nonmatch
1. Visual_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Audio_____	_____	comments_____	
3. Audio & Visual_____	_____	_____	
4. Written_____	_____	_____	
5. Other_____	_____	_____	
d. Sensory-motor impairments	Sensory mode required	Match	Nonmatch
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	Safety_____	comments_____	
	student ability to use media equipment_____	_____	
	_____	_____	
e. Response modes most comfortable with	Response mode required	Match	Nonmatch
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	comments_____	
		_____	
f. Preferred Reinforcement	Reinforcement Provided	Match	Nonmatch
_____	_____	_____	_____
		comments_____	
		_____	
g. Preferred Teaching mode	Preparation_____	Match	Nonmatch
_____	Physical characteristics	_____	_____
_____	_____	comments_____	
	Appropriate Practice	_____	
	_____	_____	
	Prompting_____		
h. Attention Span_____	Time needed_____	Match	Nonmatch
_____	_____	_____	_____
		comments_____	
i. Other_____			

If a mismatch occurs between the materials or curriculum and the needs of the children in your class, the next step would be to adapt the materials you have selected. Such adaptation would only be feasible if the areas that need to be changed are minimal. Any changes that are too time consuming are not practical and may require that another material be selected that requires minor changes.

In adapting materials four areas of concern are: (1) the child's skill level; (2) cultural background; (3) learning and perceptual style; and (4) language ability.

Adapting for skill level

One of the first things that must be done before the material is used is to assess the child's skill level. Many materials do not include any tests to assess preliminary skill needs in determining where to begin instruction. This means that one of the first adaptations to be made is to devise a skill assessment test which is appropriate for the material. The child's skill level will determine whether adaptations in the material will require the teaching of a prerequisite, the resequencing of activities, or the breaking up of activities into smaller segments. The language of the child in the assessment of skill level is crucial.

Making Materials Culturally Relevant

Making a material culturally relevant can be done in a variety of ways: (1) adding a topic; (2) allowing the child to express own experiences which are different because of culture,

customs, religion, etc.; (3) adding an activity such as art or music which is related but deals with cultural differences. Cultural relevance does not have to be restricted to ethnicity, but can include a sensitivity to differences such as sex, religion, age, language, handicapping conditions, and socio-economic status. It is important to remember that the inclusion of culturally relevant topics in and of themselves do not address the total needs of the culturally diverse exceptional child.

Adapting Materials for a Particular Learning Style

A factor determining the use of certain materials is whether the child learns better using a visual, auditory, tactile, or a multisensory approach. Adaptations may be made in the practice of a skill using supplemental materials which utilize a particular learning style the child is most comfortable with.

Another type of learning style that must be considered is whether the child is impulsive or reflective. Does the child think of a response and carefully consider the alternatives before responding or is the child impulsive and choose any response.

Adapting for Cognitive Style

Cognitive style differences among different cultural groups have been substantiated by research (Witkin, 1979). Most of the work of this type has been done with Mexican-American groups in the United States and indicates that there are differences in the manner in which a child perceives and processes information which may directly relate to learning outcomes. The Mexican-American child is said to be field dependent or field sensitive and perceives information as a whole. Most school materials and tests

are geared toward the field independent cognitive style or that which perceives information apart from the whole (is better able to break information up into small parts and analyze it). The field sensitive child differs not only in the manner he processes information but in personality characteristics which determine affective influence.

Adapting Materials for Language Differences

Teachers of Spanish-speaking exceptional children claim that they adapt materials to accommodate for language differences more than they adapt for any other learning difference. This is not surprising since the manner in which children interact and consequently learn from the material depends on their ability to understand it.

In some ways adapting materials for language differences can be the easiest or the most difficult method of adapting. Direct translations of the material can be fairly simple given the teacher's knowledge of th child's language. The difficulty comes in adapting to match ability level along with the language translation. This is not an easy task for it my involve a careful analysis of how the material is taught, what is taught, and how assessment is done before and after the use of the material.

AREA	PROBLEM	QUESTIONS	SOLUTIONS
A. What is Taught Objectives	The objective includes a behavioral outcome that requires English-speaking ability.	1. Is the child's use of English necessary for the demonstration of a skill? 2. Can the child use another language to demonstrate knowledge of skill?	Rewrite the objective taking into account the child's lack of English-speaking ability_____
Prerequisites	Child does not understand certain English vocabulary used. Child does not have certain skills needed.	1. Will teaching vocabulary remedy situation? 2. Can skills related to material be taught in a short period of time?	Teach prerequisite Language skills_____ Teach other prerequisite skills_____
Sequence	Child is lacking some of the skills in sequence. Child already has some of the skills in sequence.	1. Can skills be added or removed from material?	Add activities to sequence_____ Remove irrelevant activities _____
Content	Material is not culturally sensitive	1. Could culturally sensitive topics be included without distorting content? 2. What's the best way to make material culturally sensitive?	Add or delete information to make it more culturally appropriate.

AREA	PROBLEMS	QUESTIONS	SOLUTIONS
Content(cont.)		3. Where would it be most appropriate to place culturally sensitive topics?	Add or delete information to make more culturally appropriate_____
B. How material is Taught Practice	The child's experience with certain parts of the material is limited.	1. Does child need practice in interacting with vocabulary used? 2. Does child need practice using another learning approach? 3. Does material introduce too much too soon?	Add practice activities which include vocabulary used_____ Add practice activities which use visual, auditory, tactile, or a multisensory approach_____ Break down activities into smaller steps_____
Learner Interaction with material	The directions and content are written in a language the child does not understand. The child cannot read in either Spanish or English. The directions are too complex.	1. Can the material be translated without altering the task? 2. Which language can the child read in? 3. Can the directions be simplified easily? 4. Can the material be adapted for self instruction?	Translate directions/content orally_____ tape record_____ Demonstrate using other learning approaches_____ Demonstrate to explain certain terms_____ Rewrite instructions using less complex terms_____

AREA	PROBLEMS	QUESTIONS	SOLUTIONS
Reinforcement	Material does not provide any reinforcement	1. Which reinforcement method would be most appropriate for the child or group?	Use verbal reinforcement Use point system Use Tangibles
Redirection	Material does not appear to be providing results.	1. Does child have problem understanding content because of lack of English-speaking ability?	Provide more teacher assistance in understanding either by translating more or by explaining more explicitly Use alternative materials to develop language skills
		2. Is learning approach wrong?	Use alternative materials using a different learning style
		3. Does child just need more practice to get concept?	Practice same materials again or provide other supplemental materials for the same skill
C. Assessment			
Preassessment	No pretest is included	1. What factors related to skills need to be assessed?	Devise preassessment and continuous assessment of skills
	Language difference problems not included in preassessment	2. What factors related to language need to be assessed?	Assess language skills needed to interact well with materials
Mastery Assessment	Mastery criteria not appropriate for child's language	1. What skills are important for mastery? 2. Can criteria be changed?	Change mastery skills to accomodate for language

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